

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

U.S.S.N. 09/996,864

SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please replace the paragraph 007 on page 4 with the following rewritten paragraph:

007 To trim more than about 0.05 from the width of a photoresist layer, hard mask trimming can be utilized. Hard mask trimming involves the use of a hard mask layer underneath the photoresist. Single layer hard mask trimming, however, comes with its own disadvantages. During lateral CD trimming, for instance, a significant amount of the thickness of the hard mask layer can be lost. Where such CD trimming is accomplished on a large scale, it requires the use of a relatively thick single hard mask layer, to compensate for the thickness of the hard mask layer that will be lost. However, using a single thick hard mask layer also is disadvantageous, because it can narrow the process window for photolithography and under-layer etching, especially for ~~single~~ shallow trench isolation (STI) etching. A process window, such as an exposure-defocus (ED) window, maps the ranges within which acceptable lithographic quality occurs. The process window for a given feature shows the ranges of exposure dose and depth of focus (DOF) that permit acceptable lithographic quality.